



## San Jose Bike Party

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, March 30, 2009

On Friday, March 20, I participated in a fun event called **San Jose Bike Party**. The "bike party" is organized by people who promote bicycling in San Jose. They pass out flyers at bike shops and use the internet to get the message out. There have been 18 "Bike Parties" so far and the 19th is coming up on April 17 at 8:45pm at the old Zorba the Greek Restaurant parking lot located at South Bascom Avenue and Stokes Avenue in District 6. The bike parties are themed events, around themes like mustaches, mardi gras, robots etc... The event has some of the flair of the Burning Man scene, plus some rockabilly style, but it also includes just regular bicycle enthusiasts.

I rode my vintage, made-in-Waterloo,-Wisconsin Trek bicycle with my bicycle partner, who works on a great program called **Turning Wheels for Kids**. After congregating at the shopping center, we were sounded off to obey the traffic rules, leave no rider behind, and to pick up any litter. San Jose Bike Party also encourages helmets plus both front and back bike lights—suggestions which I followed. Apparently, the more lights you had the cooler you were; some bikers that had lights wrapped around much of their respective bicycles.

At 9:20PM the Bike Party rolled south down Stokes and made a left on Southwest Expressway to Fruitdale. At this point it seemed like we were on the General Plan 2040 tour, passing several new housing developments across from the light rail line. The group then massed to Willow Glen via side streets onto Lincoln Ave where 500 bicycles were counted by the event organizers. At this point we took up both right lanes on Lincoln Ave and little more. Onlookers were wondering what was going on, and the response was always the same as bikers yelled out "Bike Party!"

The caravan of bikes continued down Lincoln Ave and merged onto Almaden Expressway then went all the way to Blossom Hill making, a left turn en masse. The group pulled off at an empty strip mall parking lot to regroup. At this point the tandem bike that was towing a couch turned on a stereo and then younger folks started dancing instantly. After five-to-ten minutes we rode together through Oakridge Mall

where again spectators were stunned by so many bicycles cruising by. We then went all the way up to the Oakridge mall parking lot roof where we enjoyed a view of San Jose and again the music sounded and the dance party started again briefly.

From here, we went down Winfield to Pearl Avenue, passing another housing project at the Chynoweth Station (side note: not enough density in this development makes the attempt at retail nearly impossible). We then proceeded south passing the Capitol Auto Mall to the Rubino Circle neighborhood, and down to Old Almaden Road which put us back on Almaden Expressway. We then passed the Canoas Gardens neighborhood and made the fork back into Willow Glen, since my bicycle partner was tired. The Bike Party continued on all the way to Downtown finishing at SJSU. The ride was assisted by one or two SJPd cars off and on, offering automobile drivers awareness of the approaching bike party. Thank you SJPd.

If you like to ride a bike and enjoy people, then you may very well enjoy the next Bike Party. Remember to wear a helmet and grab some lights!

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